

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01071 271931Z

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9094

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 1071

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC GJ (HUGHES, ALISTER)

SUBJ: NOMINATION OF ALISTER HUGHES FOR CU/IVP GRANT

REF: (A) STATE 090985; (B) BTN 1026; (C) BTN 0621

1. NAME: HUGHES, ALISTER

SIGNIFICANT POSITION:

PRESENT: ALISTER HUGHES IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN'S MOST WIDELY-KNOWN JOURNALIST. 1974 RECIPIENT OF THE FIRST AWARD OF MERIT GIVEN BY THE CARIBBEAN PUBLISHERS AND BROADCASTERS ASSOCIATION, FOR COURAGEOUS REPORTING ON THE TURMOIL SURROUNDING INDEPENDENCE IN THE NEW NATION OF GRENADA, HUGHES IS THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN'S ONLY SYNDICATED COLUMNIST. HIS LIVELY AND INFORMATIVE WEEKLY COLUMN APPEARS IN 12 OF THE REGION'S NEWSPAPERS. HUGHES IS ALSO A FREELANCE RADIO AND TV BROADCASTER WHOSE NEWS REPORTS ARE AIRED ON SUCH IMPORTANT REGIONAL STATIONS AS CBC BARBADOS RADIO AND TV, RAIDO 610 TRINIDAD, AND THE MONTSERRAT-BASED RADIO ANTILLES WHICH BROADCASTS IN BOTH FRENCH AND ENGLISH. HUGHES IS ALSO THE GRENADA CORRESPONDENT FOR UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE, HE DOES A WEEKLY SERIES ON THE HISTORY OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN WHICH IS ALSO CARRIED BY MANY OF THE SAME NEWSPAPERS AND BROADCASTING STATIONS. LASTLY, HUGHES PUTS OUT A WEEKLY GRENADA NEWSLETTER WHICH IS SUBSCRIBED TO BY MANY NEWSPAPERS AND EMBASSIES INCLUDING THE JAMAICA GLEANER AND MIAMI HERALD AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN, BRITISH, AND CANADIAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR GRENADA.

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PAGE 02 BRIDGE 01071 271931Z

PAST: OVER THE YEARS, ALISTER HUGHES HAS BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED

IN BOTH BUSINESS AND POLITICS. HE SERVED FOR MANY YEARS AS AN ELECTED MEMBER OF THE ST. GEORGE'S PARISH DISTRICT BOARD AND THE ST. GEORGE'S CITY COUNCIL. IN 1963, HUGHES SERVED AS DEPUTY MAYOR OF ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA'S CAPITAL CITY. FROM 1958-1963, HE SERVED AS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION GRENADA NATIONAL PARTY (GNP) WHICH WAS THE RULING PARTY FROM 1962-1967. IN BUSINESS FOR HIMSELF, HUGHES HELD THE POST OF PRESIDENT OF THE GRENADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FROM 1963-1965 AND DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE FROM 1963 TO 1972. HE HAS ALSO BEEN ACTIVE IN THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT IN THE REGION, SERVING AS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CARIBBEAN CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION IN 1967.

3. PERSONAL DATA: BORN IN GRENADA ON JANUARY 21, 1919, THE YOUTHFUL-LOOKING HUGHES IS A GRENADIAN NATIONAL.

4. TRAVEL ABROAD: HUGHES HAS NOT TRAVELLED MUCH. HE HAS VISITED THE US TWICE ON SHORT VACATIONS MOST RECENTLY IN 1964 WHEN HE SPENT SIX WEEKS IN THE NEW YORK REGION VISITING RELATIVES. HUGHES ALSO VISITED ITALY, SWITZERLAND, FRANCE AND ENGLAND FOR A TOTAL OF SIX WEEKS IN 1962. THIS YEAR, HE VISITED CANADA FOR THREE WEEKS.

5. PREVIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT GRANT: THE NOMINEE NEVER PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED A GRANT FROM THE USG.

6. ESCORT SERVICES: ESCORT SERVICE SHOULD BE PROVIDED BUT AN INTERPRETER IS NOT NECESSARY.

7. TENTATIVE VISA ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION: NOMINEE APPEARS ELIGIBLE FOR A J-1 VISA.

8. REASON FOR NOMINATION: AS THE EMBASSY HAS ALREADY INDICATED IN REFTEL B ON FY'76 COUNTRY PLAN, THE PRIMARY PURPOSE FOR NOMINATING HUGHES IS TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN SOCIETY AND INSTITUTIONS ON PART OF LOCAL LEADERS AND OPINION-MAKERS. IN SAME REFTEL, EMBASSY ALSO PROPOSED TO SEND ONE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE AS THIS POST HAS DONE IN THE PAST. WE BELIEVE ALISTER HUGHES IS PREEMINENTLY QUALIFIED FOR A LEADERSHIP GRANT BECAUSE OF THE POSITION HE ENJOYS IN THE JOURNALISTIC FIELD IN THE CARIB-

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PAGE 03 BRIDGE 01071 271931Z

BEAN. IN ADDITION, BY GRANTING HIM AN AWARD, THE USG WOULD DEMONSTRATE THAT IT IS PREPARED TO ENCOURAGE HIGHEST JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS IN THE REPORTING OF HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS IN THE REGION. HUGHES WILL ALSO BE ONE OF THE FIRST IVP GRANTEES FROM GRENADA SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN 1974. BEING A CARIBBEAN HISTORY AND CONSERVATION BUFF, HUGHES WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO GIVE LECTURES TO INTERESTED GROUPS ON THOSE TOPICS.

9. POST OBJECTIVE OF US VISIT: IN ADDITION TO ATTAINING THE OBJECTIVE OF GIVING A IVP GRANT TO AT LEAST ONE OUTSTANDING MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE A YEAR FROM THE REGION, THE EMBASSY WOULD ESTABLISH THE PRECEDENT IN GRENADA (ALREADY WELL ESTABLISHED IN BARBADOS) OF GIVING AT LEAST ONE GRANT A YEAR TO THE LEGITIMATE OPPOSITION TO THE RULING GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH HUGHES SEVERED HIS TIES TO THE OPPOSITION GNP MANY YEARS AGO, THE GRENADA GOVERNMENT OF PM ERIC M. GAIRY STILL CONSIDERS THE INDEPENDENT HUGHES AN OPPONENT, ALBEIT LAW-ABIDING, OF THE RULING GOVERNMENT. BESIDES, A GRANT TO HUGHES WOULD ACHIEVE THE POST OBJECTIVE OF DEALING IN AN EVEN-HANDED MANNER WITH THE GRENADIAN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION. (SEE ALSO BTN 1072)

10. POST ESTIMATE OF NOMINEE'S AVAILABILITY DATES FOR US PROGRAM:

UPON NOTIFICATION BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT THIS NOMINATION HAS BEEN APPROVED IN PRICIPLE, WE WILL ASCERTAIN HIS AVAILABILITY.
SIMMS

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